Criterion validity and clinical usefulness of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Rating Scale IV in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as a function of method and age.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:
The aim of this research is to analyse Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Rating Scales IV (ADHD-RS-IV) criteria validity and its clinical usefulness for the assessment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as a function of assessment method and age.

METHODOLOGY:
A sample was obtained from an epidemiological study (n = 1095, 6-16 years). Clinical cases of ADHD (ADHD-CL) were selected by dimensional ADHD-RS-IV and later by clinical interview (DSM-IV). ADHD-CL cases were compared with four categorical results of ADHD-RS-IV provided by parents (CATPA), teachers (CATPR), either parents or teachers (CATPAOPR) and both parents and teachers (CATPA&PR). Criterion validity and clinical usefulness of the answer modalities to ADHD-RS-IV were studied.

RESULTS:
ADHD-CL rate was 6.9% in childhood, 6.2% in preadolescence and 6.9% in adolescence. Alternative methods to the clinical interview led to increased numbers of ADHD cases in all age groups analysed, in the following sequence: CATPAOPR> CATPRO> CATPA> CATPA&PR> ADHD-CL. CATPA&PR was the procedure with the greatest validity, specificity and clinical usefulness in all three age groups, particularly in the childhood.

CONCLUSIONS:
Isolated use of ADHD-RS-IV leads to an increase in ADHD cases compared to clinical interview, and varies depending on the procedure used.